United Nations A/S-27/2/Add.1 (Part I)

General Assembly

Distr.: General
18 June 2001

Original: English

Twenty-seventh special session

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children on its third session*

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* The present document is an advance version of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its third session. It will appear in final form as *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Special Session, Supplement No. 2A* (A/S-27/2/Add.1).

01-41862 (E) 280601

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 54/93 of 7 December 1999, the General Assembly decided to convene in 2001 a special session for follow-up to the World Summit for Children. It also decided to establish an open-ended preparatory committee to prepare for the outcome of the special session. The General Assembly requested the preparatory committee to convene one organizational session on 7 and 8 February 2000 and one substantive session from 30 May to 2 June 2000 and to propose to the Assembly its requirements for further meetings in 2001.

2. In paragraph 16 of its resolution 55/26 of 20 November 2000, the General Assembly decided to convene two substantive sessions of the Preparatory Committee in New York during 2001, one from 29 January to 2 February and the other from 11 to 15 June.

II. Organizational matters

A. Opening and duration of the session

3. The Preparatory Committee held its third session at United Nations Headquarters from 11 to 15 June 2001. During the course of its session, the Committee held 10 plenary meetings to consider all the agenda items and four parallel meetings to consider item 5. One plenary meeting was devoted to two panel discussions.

4. The session was opened by the Chairperson of the Committee, Patricia Durrant (Jamaica), who made an opening statement and introduced the revised draft outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children" (A/AC.256/CRP.6/Rev.2 and Rev.3 (Parts I and II)). The Deputy Secretary-General, Louise Frechette, made a statement introducing the report of the Secretary-General, entitled "We the children: end-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children" (A/S-27/3). The Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Carol Bellamy, also made a statement.

B. Officers

5. At the third session, the composition of the Bureau of the Committee remained the same as for its organizational, first and second sessions:

Chairman:

Patricia **Durrant** (Jamaica)

Vice-Chairmen:

Anwarul Karim **Chowdhury** (Bangladesh)
Hanns **Schumacher** (Germany)
Madina Ly **Tall** (Mali)
Lidija **Topic** (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Rapporteur:

At the 3rd meeting of its organizational session, on 7 February 2000, the Committee designated Vice-Chairperson Lidija Topic (Bosnia and Herzegovina) as the Rapporteur.

C. Adoption of the agenda

6. At its 1st meeting, on 11 June, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda for the third session (A/AC.256/15), as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session.
5. Introduction and consideration of the report of the Secretary-General.
6. Consideration of the outcome of the special session.
7. Adoption of the report of the Preparatory Committee on its third session.
8. Other matters.

D. Documentation

7. The Committee, at its third session, had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children on its second session;[1]

(b) Provisional agenda (A/AC.256/15);

[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Twenty-seventh Special Session, Supplement No. 2* (A/S-27/2).

(c) Letter dated 23 January 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the *Machel Review 1996-2000* (A/55/749);

(d) Letter dated 22 February 2001 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting documents of the International Conference on War-Affected Children, held at Winnipeg, Canada, from 10 to 17 September 2000 (A/AC.256/14);

(e) Letter dated 7 June 2001 from the Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, transmitting the report of the Conference on Children in Europe and Central Asia, held at Berlin from 16 to 18 May 2001 (A/AC.256/16 and Corr.1);

(f) Draft provisional outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children" (A/AC.256/CRP.6/Rev.2 and Rev.3 (Parts I and II));

(g) Provisional programme of work (A/AC.256/CRP.9);

(h) Draft resolution entitled "Organizational arrangements for the round tables for the special session of the General Assembly on children" (A/AC.256/L.13);

(i) Draft decision entitled "Presentation of the outcome of the children's forum to the General Assembly at its special session on children" (A/AC.256/L.14);

(j) Draft report of the Preparatory Committee on its third session (A/AC.256/L.15).

III. Organizational arrangements for the preparatory process and the special session

8. Informal consultations (three meetings) were held on organizational arrangements for the round tables and on the participation of children and adolescents in the special session.

9. The Committee considered item 4 at its 9th meeting, on 15 June. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session the adoption of a draft resolution entitled "Organizational arrangements for the round tables for the special session of the General Assembly on children" (see chap. VII, sect. A).

10. At the same meeting, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh special session the adoption of a draft decision entitled "Presentation of the outcome of the children's forum to the General Assembly at its special session on children" (see chap. VII, sect. B).

IV. Introduction and consideration of the report of the Secretary-General

11. The Committee considered item 5 of its agenda at its 1st, 2nd and 4th to 6th meetings, from 11 to 13 June. Representatives of Member States, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations made statements on the report of the Secretary-General. Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah of Jordan addressed the Committee on 13 June.

V. Consideration of the outcome of the special session

12. Under item 6 of the agenda, the Committee considered the draft outcome document of the special session at formal and informal meetings, from 11 to 15 June. Delegations made comments and suggestions on the draft outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children" (A/AC.256/CRP.6/Rev.2 and Rev.3 (Parts I and II)).

13. At its 10th meeting, on 15 June, the Committee adopted a decision regarding its further consideration of the outcome document of the twenty-seventh special session of the General Assembly (see chap. VII, sect. C).

VI. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its third session

14. At the 10th meeting, on 15 June, Hanns Schumacher (Germany), Vice-Chairperson, introduced the draft report of the Committee on its third session (A/AC.256/L.15).

15. At the same meeting, the Committee took note of the summaries by the Chairpersons of the two panels convened at its third session (see annexes I and II).

16. Also at its 10th meeting, the Committee adopted the draft report on its third session (A/AC.256/L.15), as orally amended.

VII. Recommendations and decision of the Committee

A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth regular session*

17. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children recommends to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth regular session the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Organizational arrangements for the round tables for the special session of the General Assembly on children

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 54/93 of 7 December 1999 and 55/26 of 20 November 2000 on the preparations for the special session on children,

1. *Decides* that the special session of the General Assembly on children will include three interactive round-table sessions;

2. *Decides* also to adopt the organizational arrangements annexed to the present resolution;

3. *Further decides* that these arrangements shall in no way create a precedent for other special sessions.

Annex

1. The round tables shall be held as follows:

Round table 1: Wednesday, 19 September 2001, from 3 p.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Round table 2: Thursday, 20 September 2001, from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Round table 3: Friday, 21 September 2001, from 9.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

2. The round tables will have as their overarching theme "Renewal of commitment and future action for children in the next decade".

3. Each round table shall have two co-chairpersons, for a total of six co-chairpersons. The co-chairpersons shall be heads of State or Government. Five co-chairpersons shall be selected from the five regional groups by 31 July 2001. The sixth co-chairperson, who shall be the head of State of the country of the President of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly, will co-chair round table 3.

4. Each round table shall be limited to a maximum of 71 participants, of whom approximately 66 will be heads of delegation of Member States and approximately five will be participants representing observers and entities of the United Nations system.

5. Following the selection of the chairpersons of the round tables, each regional group should determine which of its members will participate in each round table, ensuring that equitable geographical distribution will be maintained, allowing for some flexibility.

6. Thus, in order to allow for some flexibility, for each round table the maximum number of participants from each regional group will be as follows:

African States	18 Member States
Asian States	18 Member States
Eastern European States	8 Member States
Latin American and Caribbean States	12 Member States
Western European and other States	10 Member States

7. Member States that are not members of any of the regional groups may participate in a round table of their choice.

8. For each round table, participants other than Member States, representing observers and entities of the United Nations, will be selected by the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with Member States. In addition, the President of the General Assembly, in consultation with the co-chairpersons of

* Adopted by the General Assembly at its 104th plenary meeting, on 22 June 2001 (see Assembly resolution 55/276).

each round table and Member States, shall choose by 31 August 2001 two child delegates, taking into account equitable gender and geographic representation, who shall each be permitted to present a brief introductory statement on the theme of the round tables in a language of their choice.

9. Each head of delegation attending a round table may be accompanied by two advisers.

10. The Holy See and Switzerland, in their capacity as observer States, and Palestine, in its capacity as observer, may also participate in different round tables, to be determined in consultation with the President of the General Assembly.

11. Co-chairpersons from each round table will be responsible for presenting orally their summary of the discussions during the concluding plenary meeting of the special session.

12. The round tables will be closed to the media and the general public. Accredited delegates and observers will be able to follow the proceedings of the round tables via a closed-circuit television in the overflow room.

B. Draft decision recommended for adoption by the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh special session

18. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children recommends to the General Assembly at its twenty-seventh special session the adoption of the following draft decision:

Draft decision III
Presentation of the outcome of the children's forum to the General Assembly at its special session on children

The General Assembly, recalling its resolutions 54/93 of 7 December 1999 and 55/26 of 20 November 2000 on the preparations for the special session on children, decides that:

(a) At least two national child delegates to the children's forum, to be held in New York from 16 to 18 September 2001 as a side event of the special session, will be allowed to present the outcome of the forum in the plenary of the special session;

(b) The child delegates will be identified by the children's forum, in consultation with the President of the General Assembly and Member States.

C. Decision adopted by the Committee regarding further consideration of the draft outcome document of the special session

19. The Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on Children decides to consider and take action on the draft outcome document, entitled "A world fit for children", at its resumed third session.

Annex I

Summary of the panel discussion on children and armed conflict

Participants. The participants in the panel were Olara Otunnu, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (Chairperson); Jean-Marie Guéhenno, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Gencer Oswaldo Cerón Santamaría, youth representative of the Colombian Children's Movement for Peace; María Marta Valladares, founding member of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (El Salvador) and Deputy to the Central American Parliament; and Roger Laloupo, Director of Legal Affairs, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

The panellists' interventions as well as those of the audience addressed a broad range of issues concerning the protection of children's rights in conflict situations, peace processes and post-conflict scenarios. The following key points were raised:

Child soldiers. The recruitment or use of children by armed forces or groups should be considered a war crime and a crime against humanity, and abduction should be considered a gross violation of humanitarian law. A call was made to release all child combatants and to hand them over to child protection agencies for their disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. Rehabilitation of child soldiers was identified as a key long-term task in that regard.

Inclusion of children's rights in peace negotiations, peace accords and peacekeeping operations. The rights and specific protection needs of children should be addressed in peace agreements and peace accords, as well as in peacekeeping mandates. The Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations proposed the creation of an informal inter-agency working group to evaluate lessons learned on child protection and child rights in peacekeeping operations — including their mandates and staffing tables — and to discuss how the efforts of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in those areas could be supported in the future, particularly at the peace negotiation stage. A former armed group leader and peacemaker from El Salvador noted that children's rights had not been explicitly addressed throughout El Salvador's peace process or in the accords. As a result, respect for children's rights remained a challenge in the post-conflict period.

Regional organizations. The meeting heard from the representative of ECOWAS about concrete measures to integrate issues of children's rights into the conflict prevention and resolution activities of ECOWAS; its work should be further supported and imitated.

Participation and involvement of youth and local communities. The youth representative in particular stressed that young people should be involved in decision-making processes, in efforts towards reconciliation and coexistence, and in peace negotiations. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General stressed that there was a need to work together with local communities to strengthen the protection of children in conflict situations.

Education. Education needs to be mainstreamed into emergency response programmes and should be recognized as a measure to prevent the recruitment of child soldiers. Quality primary education should be made compulsory and available free to all, as stated in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Displaced children. It was recognized that displaced children are most exposed to the risks of abuse and that special attention should be paid to their specific needs. The importance of tracing and reuniting unaccompanied children with their families was also stressed.

The girl child. The particular situation of girls, who are specifically affected by armed conflicts and more exposed and vulnerable to violations of their rights, was underlined. Rape, sexual exploitation and gender-based violence during times of conflict should be addressed as well as the rehabilitation of girl soldiers and sex slaves.

Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. Eighty States have to date signed the Protocol, yet only five have ratified it; at this rate, the goal of the 10 ratifications necessary to bring the Protocol into force in time for the special session of the General Assembly on children will not be met. States were urged to ratify the Protocol and to set 18 as the minimum age for voluntary recruitment.

Numerous governmental delegations pledged political and financial support for actions on behalf of war-affected children and for increased attention to the plight of children being targeted in conflict situations. Non-governmental organizations and youth representatives referred to the importance of including strong provisions for the protection of children in conflict situations in the outcome document of the special session.

Annex II

Summary of the panel discussion on the commercial sexual exploitation of children

The Chief of the Child Protection Section of UNICEF, Karin Landgren, moderated the panel. Introducing the panellists she noted that, despite international legal consensus on the illegality of commercial sexual exploitation of children, the problem was serious and growing.

Vitit Muntarbhorn highlighted the gap between the existing legal instruments and their implementation, which is weak. He said that while it is essential to criminalize the commercial sexual exploitation of children, child victims should not be penalized, and should be provided with child-friendly facilities.

Nandi Msezane called for the full involvement of young people in combating the commercial sexual exploitation of children; she referred to projects involving networks of young people and the Declaration of a conference held at Manila in May 2000 in this connection.

Cherry Kingsley described different types of vulnerability in children. She emphasized the importance of the participation of children in the efforts to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children as it also provided a healing process for them.

Claire Brisset described the situation in France and regretted that Europe did not speak with one voice on the commercial sexual exploitation of children. She emphasized the need to address the non-commercial aspects of sexual exploitation, primarily within families.

Makiko Arima, personal representative of the Prime Minister of Japan, outlined the arrangements for the Second World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children, to be held at Yokohama, in December 2001, and the preparatory steps including the participation of children and young people. She invited the delegations to Yokohama.

Ambassador Akasaka of Japan took the floor to reaffirm the invitation to Yokohama. The representative of Cameroon referred to poverty and the breakdown of parental authority as main reasons for the commercial sexual exploitation of children and emphasized the importance of training young people on the issue. The representative of Sweden stressed the need for cross-border cooperation to combat the commercial sexual exploitation of children and introduced the Swedish project in the framework of Baltic States, as well as a project on trafficking in cooperation with Thailand and the Philippines. The youth representative from Norway spoke about sex tourism and asked that the same values be applied to children in developing countries as to children in developed countries. A representative from Morocco introduced the Casablanca regional meeting on the commercial sexual exploitation of children to be held after the special session.

Ms. Landgren thanked the panellists and the delegations for their contributions and commitment to this issue. Many speakers on the list were unable to take the floor for lack of time.